

Exercise: The key to weight loss

Provided by Jeff Rustein [Global Health & Fitness](#)

As we grow older it seems that we are in a constant battle with our waistline. The older we get the harder it is to lose weight.

Many of us have tried various fad diets which may take the weight off in the short run but undoubtedly it comes right back. In fact, over 95% of dieters will put the weight back on plus an extra five pounds.

Diets just don't work. The key to permanent weight loss is through exercise and proper nutrition through behavior modification.

When we diet we're losing fat and also muscle. This decrease in muscle mass will cause our metabolism to slow down, so we are unable to burn as many calories. As we age this naturally begins to occur. After our mid 20s our metabolic rate decreases by approximately five percent per decade. One explanation for this is that our muscle mass decreases and our body fat increases due to inactivity. We get caught up in our work and spend our leisure time in front of the TV instead of taking care of our bodies. Being overweight is one of the major causes of hypertension, high blood pressure, certain types of cancer and an overall lackluster feeling.

As many dieters know, the weight is going to come back faster and faster the more you diet. Whether you're eating pre-packaged foods, diet shakes, or grapefruits and water, you're not going to be able to stay with it forever without going crazy. When you see that chocolate cake you won't be able to just have one piece you're likely to eat the whole thing. It's a vicious cycle.

There is good news. Something can break this cycle--exercise. In order to lose weight we must create a caloric deficit, that is, we must expend more calories than we are consuming. This is done through exercise and proper nutrition, not fad diets. Through exercise we are able to burn calories and add muscle. For every pound of muscle we obtain, an extra 350 calories per week is burned in order to sustain this. We'll be using up extra calories even while we sleep.

Aerobic exercises, such as walking and jogging, are excellent ways to burn calories. Always begin with a warm-up period of 3-5 minutes, gradually reaching your target heart rate. (Aerobic Training is 70 to 80 percent of your maximal heart, which is estimated at $220 - \text{age}$. For example, if you are 50 yrs. old your target heart would be 119 beats per minute through 136 beats per minute.) Always start at the low end of your target heart rate. Exercising in this range for 15 through 20 minutes will allow for fat reduction to occur. A cool down of 3 to 5 minutes is recommended as this allows for your heart rate to gradually return to normal.

Remember, consult your physician about any exercise program you are considering.

In order to shape and tone our bodies we need to do body shaping exercises. This will add muscle and firmness to our physiques. Many women tend to deposit fat around their thighs and buttocks, while males tend to put fat around their stomachs.

Here are a few exercises that can help tighten these areas.

Outer thigh lift: Lying on your right side with your hips and ankles in line with your shoulders, slowly lift your left leg as high as possible, hold, then return to the starting position. Do 10 repetitions and switch sides.

Inner thigh lift: Lying on your left side with your hips and ankles in line with your shoulder. right knee is bent to 90* angle. Slowly lift your left leg as high as possible. hold, then return to the starting position. Do 10 repetitions and switch sides.

Abdominal crunches: Lying on your back with knees bent and hand behind your head, slowly curl your shoulders up. pause, slowly lower to the starting position. Do 10 repetitions.

You will notice that you will be much more conscience of the foods you're eating when you exercise. Since you'll be taking care of your body you won't want to fill it up with junk foods.

It is best to eat three well balanced meals and two nutritious snacks in between. This will help eliminate the binge eating that often happens when meals are skipped. Try to drink plenty of water and eat high fiber foods since this will give you a full feeling without adding extra calories.

The key to any exercise program is to get proper instruction. A competent personal trainer will make all the difference.

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